

MINUTES  
**CALIFORNIA BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL**  
March 24, 1995  
Napa Valley Exposition, Riesling Hall  
575 Third Street, Napa, California

**Executive Council Members Present**

Douglas Wheeler, Resources Agency  
Robert Meacher, Regional Council of Rural County Supervisors  
Chuck Raysbrook, Department of Fish and Game  
Ken Jones, Department of Parks and Recreation  
Richard Wilson, Department of Forestry and Fire Protection  
Howard Sarasohn, Department of Transportation  
Jerry Harmon, San Diego Association of Governments  
Hershel Read, Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Penny Howard, Bureau of Reclamation  
Bob Therkelsen, California Energy Commission  
Bob Hoekzema, U.S. Bureau of Mines  
Nita Vail, Department of Food and Agriculture  
Chauncey Poston, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts  
Wayne White, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Maria Rea, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Robert Molleur, U.S. Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation Service  
Stanley Albright, National Park Service  
Diana Jacobs, State Lands Commission  
Laurence Laurent, South Central Coast Regional Association of County Supervisors  
Don Erman, University of California  
Dale Hoffman-Floerke, Department of Water Resources  
Ed Hastey, Bureau of Land Management  
Barry Noon, National Biological Service  
Liz Fuchs, California Coastal Commission  
John Klein, U.S. Geological Survey  
G. Lynn Sprague, U.S. Forest Service  
Nancy Huffman, Northern California County Supervisors Association  
Michael Fischer, California Coastal Conservancy

**Staff**

Carl Rountree, Bureau of Land Management  
Susan Cochrane, Department of Fish and Game

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS**

After a welcome from Napa County Supervisor Mike Rigney, Secretary Douglas Wheeler introduced the new members of the council as follows: Bob Hoekzema, U.S. Bureau of Mines, and John Klein, U.S. Geological Survey.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR THE MARCH 24, 1995 MEETING**

The minutes were approved as submitted.

## **REPORT ON LOCAL GROUP FORUM MEETING MARCH 23, 1995**

Mark Nechodom presented a report on the fourth local group forum, calling the council's attention to a two-page summary which was distributed to council members.

The forum focused on three local issues, beginning with a presentation from Sandra Purcell on Pierce's Disease and the connection between riparian zones and the spread of Pierce's Disease. This was followed by Zachary Berkowitz who discussed the Carneros Quality Alliance. The third local issue was presented by Kathleen Edson on the Role of Education. These local presentations were moderated by Dennis Bowker from Napa Resource Conservation District.

After the presentations were completed, an open discussion was held. Key issues raised and discussed included: flood control, urban sprawl and environmental protection, water quality and allocations, and education of farmers and producers.

During a discussion on improving working relationships with public agencies, the following was presented for consideration:

1. Review county ordinances and make sure they are compatible with other management plans.
2. Provide clear rein at the local level to ensure participation, not control.
3. Follow through with agreements.
4. Shift from being regulatory to providing support to local efforts.
5. Need for conflict resolution.

Mr. Nechodom observed and commented on a shift in relationships between agencies and constituencies, which gave evidence that a competent and enthusiastic public that works very hard inspires agencies to respond in-kind. In closing, he encouraged as many council members as possible to attend these local group forums.

## **PRESENTATION ON WATERSHED PLANNING IN NAPA COUNTY**

Dennis Bowker, Napa Resource Conservation District, presented information to the council regarding Napa county's efforts with their watershed and ecosystem planning process. They recognized the complexity of biodiversity and found that regulation is not functioning very well in dealing with these complexities. He suggested that rather than change the cycle of regulation/crisis/regulation, it is more productive to work on the behavior of those managing the watersheds, those living there every day.

Rather than continuing to solve problems based on history, they've taken a different approach, one which is goal-based instead of problem-based. By understanding and sharing private interests and public interests through mutual communication, we can educate each other about what our needs really are and then trust in the process to help move forward.

Through the use of the land stewardship approach, they have been able to successfully manage watersheds based on commitment. People are cooperating because they see it in their own self-interest to do so.

Among the noted accomplishments are:

1. Use of this type of approach to create a hillside ordinance that protects lands over 5 percent slope from being developed.
2. Notice of a marked decrease in sedimentation and bank failures in these last big storms in the streams which have used this process.
3. Economic modeling was used to show industrial parks that they are going to have longer residents with higher rents by creating a park and restoring creeks instead of lining it with concrete in order to get more developable room.

Mr. Bowker reviewed the development of the Napa River Watershed Owners Manual which is available at no charge to people in Napa County and at a fee to people outside the valley.

## **PRESENTATION ON SONOMA COUNTY SUSTAINABLE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

Ruth Stadnik, Assistant to the General Manager of the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, and Tish Ward, an RCD director and farmer, presented information on making the preservation of biodiversity economically viable at the county level.

Ms. Stadnik indicated Sonoma county has less public resource land than many other counties. Eighty percent of the open space land is held in private farms and ranches. Since biodiversity is better preserved on farm land than in urban areas, she indicated preserving biodiversity in Sonoma county means preserving private farms land and ensuring that farming remains economically viable.

She cited Sonoma county's general plan's agricultural resources and open space elements addresses this concern. The general plan contains the following recommendations:

1. One of the most economically effective recommendations in the general plan was the establishment of the agricultural preservation and open space district and programs for purchase and transfer of development rights, thus reducing the incentive for the farmer to sell his land for urban development.
2. Purchase conservation easements from privately owned land rather than owning and managing the land for a fee. This would result in savings in several areas.
3. Provide for an agricultural marketing program to establish the unique identity of Sonoma county products.
4. Recommend streamlining the permit process for agricultural-related facilities. This would allow for farm worker housing and encourage reuse of treated waste water for irrigation.

Tish Ward continued this presentation with information on ways to get the farmer to support the various issues. Increasing watershed awareness is seen as a key first step, through such things as the local junior colleges providing leadership, by landowner outreach, landowner meetings, demonstration projects and field days.

## **PRESENTATION ON FARMLAND AND OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION REPORT**

Mary Handel presented information concerning a comparative study of the four North Bay counties of Solano, Napa, Sonoma and Marin, in an effort to look at open space and agriculture preservation measures. Although this study is part of a larger study, these four counties were examined because of their reputation for being more advanced in the area of farmland and open space protection measures. She referred the council to an order form for the project report which covers in depth the issues she briefly reviewed.

Among the essential tools for a successful protection program are the following:

1. Land trusts. Each of the four counties has a functioning and established land trust that has been important for preserving agriculture and open space.
2. Voter initiatives. Two counties, Solano and Napa, use voter initiatives to directly control growth. Marin and Sonoma counties use the voter initiative to put in place open space districts.
3. Various tools also used are transfer of development rights and joint powers agreements.

Key to the success of their program has been:

1. Making a conscious decision and a concerted effort to preserve open space and agricultural land.
2. Preservation has involved a local effort with a separate political arena.
3. Concerted efforts by grassroots movements from the citizens, rather by movement from elected officials.
4. Have the support of the farmers and use their expertise in protecting agricultural land.
5. Cooperation must occur with people employed by the government, whether it be county staff or elected officials.
6. Take proactive steps.

Alvin Sokolow reviewed the larger project which takes a look at farmland policy, city policy, and city road strategies in a sample of seven Central Valley counties. He cited regional differences between the North Bay and Central Valley as follows:

1. Coastal counties are somewhat more advanced in terms of having policies in place which protect farmland.
2. Central Valley counties severely limit, almost prohibit, rural development and tend to divert growth to the cities.
3. Perceptions of the purpose of farmland is quite different between the regions.
4. Public consciousness of environmental issues is more limited in the Central Valley.
5. There is less mobilization of community groups in the Central Valley around farmland and other open space issues.

## **COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Department of Food and Agriculture - Noxious Weeds on Natural Lands**

Nita Vail, Department of Food and Agriculture, referred the council's attention to a copy of a letter from the Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management about a Memorandum of Understanding regarding noxious weed control. As part of a 1974 Noxious Weed Act, this gives USDA authority to attempt to manage invasive weeds. This memorandum was circulated to various agencies, many of which are represented on the council. There will be a proposal from the CDFA to the impacted agencies concerning requests for the establishment of a coordinating role and a position.

### **Department of Parks and Recreation/National Park Service - Cooperative Management of Parklands**

Ken Jones, California Department of Parks and Recreation, directed the council's attention to an information packet which contained a Memorandum of Understanding that was signed by Stan Albright, Western Regional Director of National Park Service, and Donald Murphy, from Department of Parks and Recreation.

Mr. Jones reviewed recent successful efforts in applying this MOU to various national and state park lands. Areas of focus were the North Coast redwoods area, some parts of Prairie Creek, Redwood National Forest, Delmar Redwoods, Marin area which include Angel Island and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the Santa Monica Mountains.

Collaborative efforts underway include joint resource management, training, and cooperative GIS program studies. Special reference was made to a joint training effort called Healing the Desert.

### **Bureau of Land Management/U.S. Forest Service - California Partners in Flight Riparian Habitat Joint Venture**

Dan Evans, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, presented information to the council on the Riparian Habitat Joint Venture. He referred the council members' attention to a newsletter by Partners in Flight California that contains an overview of the activities, goals, and details of this joint venture.

Areas of important progress are:

1. U.S. Forest Service has provided an interim coordinator to organize meetings and assign tasks.
2. Department of Fish and Game is seeking special funds through a budget change proposal to provide long term coordination to ensure the continued success of this program.
3. A technical committee was formed and assigned specific tasks of compiling basic information of the work being done in riparian areas throughout the state.
4. Promotion of various restoration projects as excellent examples of protection of biodiversity in riparian areas.
5. Continued efforts to involve the private sector. This has been greatly assisted by the release of the newsletter.

### **National Biological Service - Endangered Habitats Report and CERES Science Committee**

Anne Kinsinger, National Biological Service, and Barry Noon presented information to the council regarding the Endangered Ecosystems of the United States, A Preliminary Assessment of Loss and Degradation, the first report of the National Biological Service. Mr. Noon explained that while final copies aren't available yet, the report is available through e-mail over the Internet

(<http://www.its.nbs.gov>).

This report is a survey of available data related to the distribution and extent of major vegetation communities in the United States and how these communities have changed with time. The primary inference to draw from this study is that there have been significant declines in many ecosystems types. This report is intended to stimulate discussion and to acknowledge the extensive changes in landscape patterns. It should also serve as a stimulus and focus for additional research efforts in the scientific community.

Peter Stine continued the presentation with a status report for the California Environmental Resources Evaluation System, or CERES. This system is the equivalent to the National Biological Information Infrastructure. He referred the council's attention to a one-page memorandum requesting the council's consideration of nominating individuals to serve on a CERES Science Committee. The purpose of the committee is to look to the future and anticipate the kinds of data that should go into CERES, review the scope of CERES, and help develop the structural framework for CERES, particularly as it relates to conservation planning and biodiversity protection.

Secretary Wheeler stated the Resources Agency's consideration of CERES as being a high priority. He introduced Gary Darling, the CERES project manager, and suggested attendees view the on-line demonstration capacity of CERES.

Ed Hastey suggested that the council consider expanding the scope and representation on the committee such that biological research in the state could be inventoried and prioritized. Staff was asked to report back to the Council the recommended function and role of a science committee that addresses both CERES and Biodiversity Council needs.

### **Department of Fish and Game - Farming for Wildlife brochure**

Chuck Raysbrook referred the council's attention to an information packet pertaining to the promotion of farming and wildlife in a partnership called the Agricultural Advisory Committee. An initial meeting was held last year and was participated in by farmers and ranchers. At the next meeting, assignments of projects and membership encouragement will be undertaken. The committee is currently searching for a venue and identifying an agenda. Their work product will be a brochure that outlines wildlife-friendly practices. The brochure is expected to be available for distribution before the next meeting of the council.



## **FINAL REPORT OF LIAISON COMMITTEE**

Al Wright delivered the final report of the Liaison Committee. This committee, whose function will now be taken on by the Executive Committee, was formed to ensure regular meetings of senior level managers, create a core from the main council to conduct the business of the council, and to make policy recommendations when necessary.

Composition of the Executive Committee consists of representatives as follows:

1. One from the Resources Agency
2. Two from state agencies
3. Two from federal agencies
4. Two from local government
5. Two from at-large

To assure greater continuity at the outset, four of the committee members have been drawn from the four most active members of the council. These members are the Department of Fish and Game, the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management. These four members have been appointed to one three-year term initially. After 1998, these terms will revert to one two-year term. The other representatives will serve two-year terms.

The functions of the Executive Committee include conducting administrative business, recommending policy, and performing other duties as assigned by the council. The committee will address the financial operating requirements of the council, assume the responsibilities of all other previously established sub-committees and develop short and long-term strategies for more effective implementation of the biodiversity agreement.

The first meeting of the Executive Committee is to be held at 1:00 p.m. on March 24, 1995. This will be chaired by the Resources Agency. Everyone was encouraged to attend. The next meeting of the committee is scheduled for June 16 following the next council meeting in Sacramento.

The budget for the committee was reviewed. The operating budget will be \$80,000, principally earmarked for conducting the four meetings throughout the year, continuing to prepare and publish the Biodiversity News, and maintaining the help desk in Sacramento.

Additionally, the committee will address the funding of a number of activities which member agencies of the council are involved in such as local group forums, training, and regional manager's workshops.

Six actions resulting from the local forum in San Diego were referred to the Liaison Committee. These were referred to Secretary Wheeler for an appropriate response. The committee is encouraged by the participation of the agencies and by San Diego's continued participation in efforts in the southern part of the state.

Discussion was held regarding a motion for the addition of a Coastal Regional Association of County Supervisors member to the Executive Committee. As a procedural matter it was agreed to hold this discussion at the meeting of the Executive Committee. The first motion and the motion for amendment were withdrawn. A motion followed to refer discussion to the Executive Committee. This was moved and accepted.

### **Additional Council Business**

Laurence Laurent made a formal request of the Executive Committee for its future agenda consideration of a presentation by the Ormond Beach Observers to review their concerns about the Ormond Beach and Blue Lagoon areas in Ventura County. This matter was referred to staff. Request was made for the presentation to be scheduled at the next council meeting.

Don Erman delivered a progress report to Secretary Wheeler regarding proposals received from various local entities in support of the Klamath Training and Development Project.

Michael Fischer addressed the Council regarding a \$250,000 grant.

### **SCHEDULE OF THE NEXT MEETINGS**

Future meetings are June 15-16, 1995 in Sacramento, September 21-22, 1995 in Eureka, December 7-8, 1995 in Barstow, March 21-22, 1996 in Monterey, and June 20-21, 1996 in Sacramento.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.